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MARYLAND BRIEFING

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Free Parking Limited at Two Libraries

Library patrons in Rockville and Bethesda will no longer have unlimited free parking. In a 5 to 4 vote, the Montgomery County Council backed a resolution to limit free parking to two hours at libraries where fees for parking are normally charged.

Council member Phil Andrews (D-Gaithersburg-Rockville) introduced the compromise as a way to avoid an elimination of free parking. Charging an hourly fee, Andrews said, would discourage low-income patrons who have no alternative mode of transportation.

Council member George L. Leventhal (D-At Large) had sought to repeal a free-parking policy passed two years ago. Leventhal — joined by Roger Berliner (D-Potomac-Bethesda), Valerie Ervin (D-Silver Spring) and Michael Knapp (D-Upcounty) — said free library parking in the county's urban areas was difficult to monitor, discouraged residents from using public transportation and provided a subsidy to residents who can afford to drive.

Of Montgomery's 20 libraries, only Bethesda and Rockville libraries will be immediately affected. Silver Spring and Wheaton libraries will probably be affected, council aides said, if they are relocated to more congested areas.

— Ann E. Marimow